



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

# NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

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## **Gov. Blagojevich announces campaign to educate drivers about new law to protect bicyclists**

***IDOT and League of Illinois Bicyclists team up to remind drivers  
of a new law that they must give bike riders at least 3 feet***

SPRINGFIELD – As the weather warms up and more and more bicyclists are taking to the roads around the state, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today launched a public awareness effort to educate drivers about a new state law requiring motorists to pass bicyclists with at least three feet to spare. The effort – called “Please Don’t Squeeze” – starts today and is funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Division of Traffic Safety to the League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB).

“This is the time of year that more and more bicycle riders of all ages will be taking advantage of the warmer weather to get out on our roadways. Sadly, two recent fatal crashes in Chicago remind us how vulnerable bike riders can be,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “Today, we’re launching a radio campaign to educate drivers about a new law requiring motorists to give bicyclists at least three feet of space when passing. If you see a bicyclist up ahead, remember to please slow down and give that cyclist plenty of room.”

Bicycle fatalities decreased in Illinois from 24 in 2006 to a provisional count of 18 in 2007.

“The message of our radio spot is ‘Please Don’t Squeeze,’” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “We want the motoring public to be aware of the new law and to observe it. Our goal is to make the roadways safer for bicyclists and reduce crashes and injuries.”

Ed Barsotti, executive director of LIB – a statewide advocacy group - said, “The purpose of the radio campaign is to inform public before the height of the bicycling season about the new state law, which took effect last Jan. 1.”

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Barsotti said the previous law only indicated that motorists must pass bicyclists and others safely but did not specify the distance. Illinois has joined nine other states with similar safe passing laws.

The new law was sponsored by Sen. Edward D. Maloney (D-Chicago) and Rep. Elaine Nekritz (D- Des Plaines).

“We hope that when all motorists see bicyclists ahead, they know to pass them safely by affording at least three feet of space,” Barsotti said. He said the public service announcement also urges bicyclists to do their part for safety by obeying all traffic laws.

LIB received a grant of \$33,373 from IDOT’s Division of Traffic Safety to produce the radio spot and purchase airtime. The 30-second spots will air on 10 stations starting today through May 30.

LIB and IDOT worked together on a May 2007 radio campaign that urged drivers and bicyclists to obey traffic laws and share the road.

IDOT and LIB have teamed up on number of safety efforts in recent years. In 2006, IDOT provided funding for LIB to produce a bike safety video, “*Share the Road – Same Road, Same Rules, Same Rights*”, that was distributed free of charge to 2,000 Illinois high schools, private driving schools and law enforcement agencies. The video educates drivers on how they should share the road with bicyclists.

IDOT and LIB have also developed a “Safe Roads for Bicycling” program that involves teaching a class to Police Departments that makes local police more aware of bicycle safety issues.

The new radio spot can be heard at [www.bikelib.org](http://www.bikelib.org) or [www.dot.state.il.us](http://www.dot.state.il.us).